

The University of Chicago

BEN JONSON'S ETHICS IN RELATION
TO STOIC AND HUMANISTIC
ETHICAL THOUGHT

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE FACULTY IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
1930

By
CLARENCE BEVERLY HILBERRY

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No formal study has ever been made of Ben Jonson's ethics in relation to classical and renaissance ethical ideas. A great deal has been done, however, toward pointing out sources for Jonson,¹ and much of this source study has concerned passages which express Jonson's ethical beliefs.

In spite of this rather large mass of source material, however, students of Jonson still question his having had a systematic conception of ethics. His most recent editor remarks:

No school of secular thought occupied in the culture of Jacobean England precisely the position which Stoicism and Epicureanism held in Augustan Rome, as the recognized creeds of the intellectual aristocracy, toyed with or jested at by the world of fashion. The nearest approach to such a philosophic faith might be found in certain impressive commonplaces of the Renaissance, for a century or more the common possession of cultivated Europe;- the power of poetry to immortalize, the triumph of man over death by Fame. They were the coinage of poets rather than thinkers, and persisted as a literary faith without striking deep root in conviction or greatly affecting conduct. But underneath the exalted speculative affirmations of the poets there lay in Jonson's mind ethical ideas of immense potency and grip, though never by him brought into philosophic shape; ideas most nearly akin to Stoicism, had the

1. William D. Briggs has dealt with Jonson's classical sources and has proved an extensive influence of Seneca upon him. See "Notes on Underwoods XXX and on the New Inn," *Modern Philology*, X (1912 - 13), 573 - 85; "Source Material for Jonson's Epigrams and Forest," *Classical Philology*, XI (1916), 169 - 90; and *Flügel Memorial Volume*, Stanford Junior University, 1921, pp. 59 - 69. Maurice Castelain in his edition of *Discoveries* has pointed out sources for a number of other passages on ethics both in classical and renaissance writers. And Charles R. Baskerville, in *English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy*, has discussed Jonson's debt to Aristotle in connection with Cynthia's Revels. None of these men, however, has been interested primarily in Jonson's ethics and the results of their source study have never been interpreted.

Stoic's capacity to "endure and renounce" been quickened with heroic energy and daring.¹

Professor Herford does not deny that Jonson had philosophic ideas; his contention is that he never systematised them, that they lay chaotic and formless in his mind. The primary purpose of this study is to show that, as a foundation for the work of this literary satirist, there was in Jonson's mind a formulated and, for a literary man, a surprisingly consistent system of ethics.²

The second purpose of this study is to indicate how largely Jonson was indebted for his ethical concepts to classical and renaissance ethical thought. The primary influence upon him was unquestionably Stoic, and particularly Senecan. Professor Briggs has already suggested this Senecan influence in his articles on Jonson's sources. An evaluation of the source study which has been done and a further study of Seneca for source material merely serves to prove Jonson's debt to him larger and more definite. I have, therefore, chosen to place Jonson's ideas in a Stoic mould which, I am convinced, does not exaggerate his fundamental philosophic inclination.

Any close study of Jonson's ethics, however, reveals the fact that many of these basically Stoic ideas came to Jonson through the medium of the early humanists, most of whom were deeply influenced by Stoic thought as this study will show. It is essential, therefore, to make extensive references also to humanistic writing. Especially is this true since certain divergencies from Stoic thought in Jonson's ethics find their explanation in the

1. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, *Ben Jonson*, II, 369 - 70. See also W. D. Briggs, "Notes on Underwoods XXX and on the New Inn," *MP.*, X, 585, quoted on p. infra.

2. It is impossible in a brief study to analyze completely Jonson's ethical concepts. This paper constitutes a preliminary survey of a complete study which I hope to publish.

eclecticism of the humanists.

I shall present here, with parallels in Senecan and humanistic writings, a series of general ethical tenets concerning the relation of reason and virtue, the meaning of perfect virtue, and the qualities which this virtue gives to man.

Jonson's General Ethical Tenets

The basis of Stoic ethics was a belief in a law of nature. The universe is a reasonable not a chaotic one. This idea had become a corporate part of Christian thinking in the Middle Ages, and it is fundamental in the thought of all of the early English humanists. In Jonson the basic concept is equally fundamental. It appears once in a distinctly Stoic context.

Money never made any man rich, but his mind. He that can order himself to the law of nature, is not only without the sense, but the fear of poverty.¹

The belief in a law of nature also lies at the very heart of the faith which the humanists had in the power of reason. All knowledge is dependent upon an ordered universe, and ethics and morality have no other basis. Vives remarks in this connection:

In the beginning first one, and then another experience through wonder at its novelty, was noted down for use in life; from a number of separate experiments the mind gathered a universal law, which after it was further supported and confirmed by many experiments, was considered certain and established. Then it was handed

1. Disc., "Amor nummi," (III, 407a-b). See the discussion of virtue as producing harmony, p. , *infra*; and for a suggestion of the source of the passage, see p. , *infra*. See also Jonson's note on the significance of the humours and affections in the "Masque of Hymen", (III, 22a-b), and *Forest XIII*, (III, 273b). References in parentheses are to volume, page, and column in the Gifford-Cunningham three volume edition which has been used throughout this paper. For a discussion of the law of nature in classic Stoicism, see E. V. Arnold, *Roman Stoicism*, secs. 201 - 02.

down to posterity.¹

The relation of human reason and the law of the universe is admirably stated here. The belief in human reason, in knowledge, and in wisdom, roots itself in this belief in the reasonableness of the universe. The most striking statement of this conception in Jonson's work appears in "An Entertainment of King James . . . at Theobalds." Mercury says to the Genius of the house:

Genius, obey, and not expostulate;
It is your virtue: and such Powers as you,
Should make religion of offending fate,
Whose dooms are just, and whose designs are true.²

Jonson's comments on Truth also support this concept of reason as fundamental in the universe, a quality which is eternal and unifying. One section of the elaborate description of Truth in "The Barriers" is particularly significant.

Her bright eyes burn to dust, in which shines Fate;
An angel ushers her triumphant gait,
Whilst with her fingers fans of stars she twists,
And with them beats back Error, clad in mists,

1. De tradendis disciplinis, trans. by Foster Watson in Vives: On Education, p. 20. Perhaps the finest analysis in humanistic writings of the eternal law and order throughout the universe appears in the first chapter of the first book of Sir Thomas Elyot's Governour. This conception is Platonic in origin. See Kurt Schroeder, Platonismus in der Englischen Renaissance, pp. 91 ff. This study of the influence of Platonism on early humanism will indicate other points of contact between sixteenth century Platonism and the Stoicism which I discuss here. Since, however, the primary influence upon Jonson is Stoic, I have not felt it necessary to indicate all of these points of contact.

2. Vol. II, 587a. See also Cynthia's Revels, V, 3, (I, 201b). Fate frequently represents world-reason in Stoic writings, See E. V. Arnold, Roman Stoicism, secs. 222 - 23, and Seneca, De beneficiis, IV, 7, (trans. by Lodge, 70), and the quotation from Jonson immediately following.

Eternal Unity behind her shines,
That fire and water, earth and air combines.¹

This belief in universal law lies at the base of the Stoic interest in physics and of the humanistic interest in natural science. At this point Jonson is equally unsympathetic with the general tenets of both Stoicism and Humanism. Erasmus, however, had a similar disregard for natural science.² It may be that their mutual concern for immediate human values and their common interest in satire influenced both of them in their attitudes on this subject. In any case, the belief in a moral law of nature controlled by reason is everywhere evident in their work.

Since, then, the universe is reasonable, man, in order to be in harmony with the law of nature, must be controlled by reason. "That alone is perfect which is perfect according to nature as a whole, and nature as a whole is possessed of reason."³ Or, to approach the matter from another point of view, reason raises man to the level of the gods, and alone distinguishes him from the animals.

1. Vol. III, 35a. In *Discoveries*, "Veritas proprium hominis," (III, 397a), Jonson applies this belief in the eternal quality of truth to the individual life. "Truth is man's proper good; and the only immortal thing was given to our mortality to use." Seneca has an almost identical statement in *Epistle CXVIII*, 9 (III, 123-24): "The real good does not perish; it is certain and lasting, and it consists of wisdom and virtue; it is the only immortal thing that falls to mortal lot." All references to the *Epistles* are to the edition with English translation by R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y. See also in Jonson *Disc.*, "Non nimium credendum antiquitati," (III, 391b), "Truth lies open to all; it is no man's several." This passage is a translation from Vives, see p. , *infra*, but the idea is a favorite of Seneca, especially when he quotes Epicurus. See, for example, *Eps.*, VIII, 8; XXI, 9; and XXXIII, 2. Note also Under., XXVI, (III, 296b), "Truth is the trial of itself . . ."

2. See William H. Woodward, *Erasmus Concerning Education*, pp. 147 - 48.

3. Seneca, *Ep.*, CXXIV, 14 (III, 444).

Thou, entertaining in thy breast
But such a mind, mak'st God thy guest.¹

Reason as the elevating force in human life appears, for example,

in Cynthia's Revels:

O how despised and base a thing is man,
If he not strive t'erec't his grovelling thoughts
Above the strain of flesh! but how more cheap,
When, ev'n his best and understanding part,
The crown and strength of all his faculties,
Floats, like a dead drowned body, on the stream,
Of vulgar humour, mix't with common'st dregs!²

Later in Cynthia's Revels, Mercury emphasizes the same idea. After the character sketch of Crites in which Mercury praises the harmony and fulness of Crites's life, made possible by his governing reason, he adds, "I could leave my place in heaven to live among mortals so I were sure to be no other than he."³

These passages in Jonson seem to go back directly to Seneca, but I wish to point out that the fundamental concept is also basic in humanistic thought. Vives remarks in the Preface to his De tradendis disciplinis,

We are not men because of our bodies which we have in common with the brutes, but in consequence of the likeness of our mind to God and the angels.⁴

Erasmus in his De pueris instituendis states the concept in a manner closer to Jonson:

Now it is the possession of Reason which constitutes a Man. If trees or wild beasts grow, men, believe me, are fashioned. Men in olden times who led their life in forests, driven by the mere needs and desires of their natures, guided by no laws, with no ordering

1. Under., CII, "Eupheme," (III, 360a). The idea is very common in Seneca. See Ep., XXXI, 11, (I, 299): "A soul that is upright, good, and great is a god dwelling as a guest in a human body." Cf. Briggs, MP, XV, 303; and Ep., CXXIV, 22 - 24 (III, 449); Ep., LXXVI, 9 (II, 157); and for an elaborate discussion De ben., II, 29, (trans. by Lodge, 36).

2. I, 1, (I, 1562-b). See Briggs, Flugel Memor, Vol., p. , for reference to Seneca's Quaestiones Naturales, I, Prologus 5.

3. II, 1, (I, 162a).

4. F. Watson, Vives: On Education, pp. 86 - 87.

in communities, are to be judged rather as savage beasts than as men. For Reason, the mark of humanity, has no place where all is determined by appetite. It is beyond dispute that a man not instructed through reason in philosophy and sound learning is a creature lower than a brute, seeing that there is no beast more wild or more harmful than a man who is driven hither and thither by ambition, or desire, anger or envy, or lawless temper.¹

Man's duty is to live in harmony with nature. "'What is the greatest good that man can possess?' It is to conduct oneself according to what nature wills."² With a psychological and political commentary, this conception is dealt with in a note by Jonson to the "Masque of Hymen:"

First, as in natural bodies so likewise in minds, there is no disease or distemperature, but it is caused either by some abounding humour, or perverse affection; after the same manner, in politic bodies (where order, ceremony, state, reverence, devotion, are parts of the mind) by the difference or predominant will of what we metaphorically call humours and affections, all things are troubled and confused. These therefore were tropically brought in before marriage as disturbers of that mystical body, and the rites which were soul unto it; that afterwards in marriage, being dutifully tempered by her power, they might more fully celebrate the happiness of such as live in that sweet union, to the harmonious laws of nature and reason.³

Right reason directing man's life in harmony with nature is virtue.

When this reason is right and has reached perfection, man's felicity is complete If a man has brought his reason to perfection, he is praiseworthy and has reached the end suited to his nature. This perfect reason is called virtue, and is likewise that which is honourable.⁴

Harmony with nature through the governance of right reason is stressed by each of the humanists as the highest duty of man.

Vives remarks in relation to individual morals:

When the nature of the body and the soul has been explained, no one is so bereft of all sense and judgment as not to see plainly and certainly, that the body ought to obey the mind, and the un-reasoning impulses of the mind must be subjected to reason as mistress and empress. In other words, it is this that makes us men; and from all the things amongst which we move, by the

1. Woodward, Erasmus Conc. Ed., p. 186. Cf. Gouvernour, pp. 1-5.

2. Seneca, Ep., LXXVI, 39 (II, 27).

3. Vol. III, p. 22a-b.

4. Seneca, Ep., LXXVI, 10 (II, 153). See also LXXVI, 32 (II, 23).

possession of reason we become most like to, and most united with, that divine Nature, which rules everything.¹

The Christian coloring of this passage merely emphasizes the originally Stoic doctrine,² as it sometimes does also in Jonson. The finest statement of the original doctrine which I have found in humanistic writing appears in the Utopia.

For they the Utopians define virtue to be life ordered according to nature, and that we be hereunto ordeined of god. And that he doth followe the course of nature, which in desiering and refusinge thinges is ruled by reason.³

It is clear that, in regard to the group of general tenets which we have considered, Jonson is in perfect agreement both with Seneca and with the humanists. On the corollaries which follow, however, we shall find some divergency in emphasis.

There are a number of qualities of ideal virtue which I shall now consider in some detail. In the first place, virtue is a state of mind, and therefore it is the individual's aim which determines his virtue or vice. Seneca expresses the general principle thus:

The same act may be either shameful or honourable: the purpose and the manner make all the difference.

The credit lies, not in the actual deed, but in the way it is done.⁴

Jonson remarks in relation to beneficence:

Nothing is a courtesy, unless it be meant us: and that friendly and lovingly It is true, some man may receive a courtesy, and not know it; but never any man received it from him that knew it not It is the mind, and not the event, that dis-

1. Watson, Vives: On Education, p. 250.

2. Erasmus in Collogues (Bailey - Johnson) II, 260, states the need for the use of reason which dictates the following of the law of nature rather than the Mosaic law, The Salt-fishmonger speaks: "I am of the Opinion, that the law which Nature has dictated, and therefore is perpetual and inviolable, ought to be accounted the more obligatory, which never was, nor ever will be abrogated."

3. Everyman ed., p. 73.

4. Ep., XCV, 43 (III, 87) and ibid., 40 (85).

tinguisheth the courtesy from wrong.¹

The source of the passage is in Seneca's De beneficiis.

There is no benefit but that which is accompanied with a good thought towards vs and such a thought and intent likewise, as is both friendly and bountifull. . . .

A man may receive a benefit vnwittingly, but no man doth good without knowing thesame. . . . It is the minde,² and not the euent which distinguisheth a benefit from an iniurie.

The same conception underlies Arete's introduction of Crites to Cynthia as

One at least studious of deserving well,
And, to speak truth, indeed deserving well,
Potential merit stands for actual,
Where only opportunity doth want,
Not will, nor power; both which in him abound.
One whom the Muses and Minerva love;
For whom should they, than Crites, more esteem,
Whom Phoebus, though not Fortune, holdeth dear?
And, which convinceth excellence in him,
A principal admirer of yourself.
Even through the ungentle injuries of Fate,
And difficulties, which do virtue choke,
Thus much of him appears.³

Seneca states the doctrine plainly in De beneficiis.

For as of all other vertues, so the whole estimation of this hath reference to the minde, if she be obseruant of that which concerneth her, whatsoeuer otherwise is deficient, is the error of Fortune. Euen as a man ceaseth not to be eloquent, although he be silent, nor strong, although his hands be bound and fettered, neither a good Pilote, although he be vpon the firme land, because hee wanteth no perfection in his science, although there be some impediment that letteth them from vsing the same.⁴

Elyot utilizes this same Senecan passage in the Gouernour.

Like as all other vertues, semblably of friendship, the estimation is referred to the mynde of a man. For if a frende persist in his office and duetie, what so euer lacketh in benefite the blame is in fortune. Like as a man may be a good synginge man, though the noyse of the standers aboute letteth him to be harde.

1. Disc., "Beneficia," (III, 396a).

2. VI, 7 - 8 (Lodge, 119 - 20). Jonson's extended discussion of beneficence, of which this is a part, is all based upon this passage in the De beneficiis. See Disc., ed by Castelain, pp. 25 - 27.

3. Cynthia's Revels, V, 3, (I, 197b).

4. IV, 21 (Lodge, 76 - 77. Error in pagination for 78 - 79.

Also he may be eloquent, though he be let to speke, and a stronge man, though his handes be bounden. Also there may happen to fayle no parte of connynges, though there be a lette so that it is nat expressed. So kyndenesse may be in wille, all though there lacketh powar to declare it.¹

Reginald Peacock had earlier discussed this question in his Folewer to the Donet. His conclusion is that "there is no sin in the non-performance of a deed, if its performance is hindered as in the second manner. (i. e. by some outward thing from acting according to its own inner nature). The sin lies in the command of the Will not to do a good deed, or to do an evil one."²

In general, however, the humanists laid little stress upon this idea as an abstract principle. In both Jonson and classic Stoicism the belief in the aim of life as alone necessary to justify it, arose as the inevitable corollary of their preoccupation with the power of Fate and Chance over human destiny. Perhaps the idealism of the early humanists with their emphasis upon the perfectibility of man permitted them to stress this conception but little. Jonson's concern with Fate is one of the points at which he connects more definitely with classic Stoicism than with humanism.

Virtue is also an inner quality of the mind and is independent of outward forms such as clothes and titles. Jonson has taken over from Seneca a very full treatment of this Stoic concept. I present only parts of it.

There is nothing valiant or solid to be hoped for from such as are always kempt and perfumed, and every day smell of the tailor . . . If we will look with our understanding, and not our senses, we may behold virtue and beauty (though covered with rags) in their

1. Everymann ed., pp. 183 - 84.

2. Ed. by Elsie V. Hitchcock, EETS, O.S., No. 164, p. 129. For convenience I have quoted Miss Hitchcock's analysis of the passage. Another expression of this principle is seen in More's presentation (Utopia, Everyman ed., pp. 34 ff.) of the refusal of Hythloday to enter the court of a Christian prince as counselor because circumstances would not permit virtuous action.

brightness; and vice and deformity so much the fouler, in having all the splendour of riches to gild them, or of the false light of honour and power to help them. Yet this is that wherewith the world is taken, and runs made to gaze on: clothes and titles, the birdlime of Fools.

What petty things they are we wonder at? like children, that esteem every trifle, and prefer a fairing before their fathers; what difference is between us and them? but that we are dearer fools, coxcombs at a higher rate?¹

Jonson based this passage upon Seneca's Epistles.

You are familiar with the young dandies, natty as to their beards and looks, fresh from the bandbox; you can never expect from them any strength or any soundness.

If . . . we are . . . willing to free our mind's eye from hindrances, we shall then be able to perceive virtue, though it be buried in the body - even though poverty stand in the way, and even though lowliness and disgrace block the path. . . . Conversely, we shall get a view of evil and the deadening influences of a sorrow-laden soul - in spite of the hindrance that results from the widespread gleam of riches that flash round about, and in spite of the false light of official position on the one side or great power on the other.

Then it will be in our power to understand how contemptible are the things we admire -- like children . . . who cherish necklaces bought at the price of a mere penny as more dear than their parents or than their brothers. And what, then . . . is the difference between ourselves and these children, except that we elders go crazy over paintings and sculpture, and that our folly costs us dearer?²

To this full discussion we may add Macilente's satirical outburst:

I was admiring mine own outside here
To think what privilege and palm it bears
Here in the court! be a man ne'er so vile,
In wit, in judgment, manners, or what else;
If he can purchase but a silken cover,
He shall not only pass, but pass regarded:
Whereas let him be poor and meanly clad,
Though ne'er so richly parted, you shall have
A fellow that knows nothing but his beef,
Will take him by the shoulders or the throat,

1. Diso., "De mollibus et effoeminatis," (III, 407 - 08) and "De Stultitia," (III, 408a). See Castelain ed. of Discoveries for the entire passage and its Senecan parallels. The first sentence appears in part identically phrased in the Dedication to Cynthia's Revels, (I, 143): "It is not powdering, perfuming, and every day smelling of the tailor, that converteth to a beautiful object: but a mind shining through any suit, which needs no false light, either of riches or honours, to help it." Jonson a number of times emphasizes the inner quality of this virtue is a little different fashion, as Kitley says of Wellbred (Every Man in, II, 1, (I, 16a), "It shewed not borrowed in him." See also Postaster, V, 1, (I, 248b) "You both have virtues, shining through your shapes . . ."; and "Amor nummi," (III, 407b): "The bravery was shown, it was not possessed; while it boasted itself, it perished." The idea is almost identically phrased in Staple of News, III, 2, (II, 314a).

2. Ep., CXV, 2 - 9, (III, 321 - 25).

And kick him down the stairs. Such is the state
Of virtue in bad clothes! ha, ha, ha, ha!¹

The belief in the inner quality of virtue is, again, a common tenet of the early humanists. The insignificance of material possessions in contrast with true education and growth in "excellence" is stated frequently by Erasmus.² Elyot less directly states the same doctrine in the Gouverneur.³

More in the Utopia hits just the blend of earnest teaching and satire which later appears in Jonson. The ambassadors of the Anemolianes thought to impress the Utopians by the sumptuousness of their garb, thinking that the plainness of the Utopian wardrobe was due to poverty. The Utopian children watching the procession through the city "digge and pushe theire mothers . . . sainge thus to them,"

Loke mother how great a lubbor doth yet were peerles and precious stooness, as though he were a litel child stil. But the mother, yea and that also in good earnest: peace, sone, saithe she: I thinke he be some of the Ambassadors fooles.⁴

More adds his serious comment a little later.

For they amrveyle that any men be so folyshe, as to have delite and pleasure in the doubtful glisteringe of a litil tryffelynge stone, which may beholde annye of the starres, or elles the sonne it selfe. Or that anye man is so madde, as to count him selfe the nobler for the smaller or fyner threde, which self same wol (be it now in never so fyne a sponne threde) a shepe did ones weare: and yet was she all that time no other thing than a shepe.⁴

The control of man's life by reason produces harmony. Hence another quality of the virtuous life is consistency, regularity, order. Seneca says of the wise man:

Virtue has been manifested to us by this man's order, propriety, steadfastness, absolute harmony of action, and a greatness of soul

1. Every Man out, III, 3, (I, 108a).

2. See Woodward, Erasmus Concerning Education, pp. 182 - 86.

3. Book I, chapters 12 and 13.

4. Everyman ed., pp. 69 - 70. The elaborate discussion of "counterfeite pleasure" which follows (pp. 75 - 77) the passage just quoted adds a great deal of detail, but nothing of fundamental importance, to the above discussion. Cf. the discussion of nobility, p. , infra.

that rises superior to everything. Thence has been derived our conception of the happy life, which flows along with steady course, completely under its own control.

Besides, he has always been the same, consistent in all his actions, not only sound in his judgment but trained by habit to such an extent that he not only can act rightly, but cannot help acting rightly. We have formed the conception that in such a man perfect virtue exists.¹

Jonson states the conception in the Poetaster:

Gal. Such is the constant ground of virtue still.
Plaut. It puts on an inseparable face.²

Virtue must be consistent. Kitley's description of Wellbred shows first the inner quality of this ordered life. I have mentioned it in connection with the inner quality of virtue, and the closeness of the relation will appear in the passages which follow. The later portion of Kitley's speech indicates the chief quality of the life contrary to nature.

When he came first to lodge here in my house,
Neer trust me if I were not proud of him:
Methought he bare himself in such a fashion,
So full of man, and sweetness in his carriage,
And what was chief it shewed not borrowed in him:
But all he did became him as his own,
And seemed as perfect, proper, and possest,
As breath with life, or colour with the blood.
But now his course is so irregular,
So loose, affected, and deprived of grace,
And he himself withal so far fallen off
From that first place, as scarce no note remains
To tell men's judgments where he lately stood.³

Seneca says of this irregularity:

The greatest proof of an evil mind is unsteadiness, and continued wavering between pretence to virtue and love of vice.⁴

The ideal is to be "always to thy gathered self the same."⁵ 'Gathered' indicates the essential composure of spirit. The idea is

1. Ep., CXX, 11, (III, 389) and ibid., 10, (III, 387).

2. II, 1, (I, 220a).

3. Every Man in, II, 1, (I, 16a).

4. Ep., CXX, 20 (III, 393). Cf. Woodward, Erasmus Concerning Education, p. 186, quoted on p. 6, supra.

5. Jonson's Epig., XCVIII, (III, 247a).

expressed metaphorically by Jonson in several ways. To Sir Henry Nevil he says:

Thou rather striv'st the matter to possess,
And elements of honour, than the dress;
To be the same in root thou art in height.¹

The figure differs in the epigram to William, Earl of Pembroke.

But thou, whose noblesse keeps one stature still,
And one true posture, though besieged with ill
Of what ambition, faction, pride can raise;
Whose life, even they that envy it, must praise.²

The conclusion of "An Epistle to a Friend to Persuade Him to the Wars," though including a number of other ideas, expresses this conception of "oneness" or consistency in the face of adverse fortune.

And take along with thee,
Thy true friend's wishes, COLBY, which shall be
That thine be just and honest, that thy deeds
Not wound thy conscience when thy body bleeds;
That thou dost all things more for truth than glory,
And never but for doing wrong be sorry;
That be commanding first thyself, thou mak'st
Thy person fit for any charge thou tak'st:
That fortune never make thee to complain,
But what she gives, thou dar'st give her again;
That whatsoever face thy fate puts on,
Thou shrink or start not; but be always one;
That thou think nothing great but what is good;
And from that thought strive to be understood.³

Erasmus's portrait of Glycion in "The Old Men's Dialogue" contains many elements of Stoic idealism and among them this conception of regularity. Glycion says of himself:

I have brought my Mind to that Temper of Indifference never to have a violent Aversion or Fondness for anything. And by that it comes to pass, that if any good Fortune happens to me, I am not vainly transported, or grow insolent; or if anything falls out cross, I am not much perplex'd.⁴

1. *Epig.*, CIX, (III, 251a).

2. *Epig.*, CII, (III, 248b).

3. *Under.*, XXXII, (III, 304 - 05). On lines 5 and 6 see "De sibi Molestis," (III, 408b).

4. *Colloquies*, (ed. by Bailey - Johnson), II, p. 80.

Latent in these passages is the related conception of the roundness, completeness of the ideal life, to which Jonson gives frequent expression.¹ A single passage will show the closeness of the relationship.

Well, with my own frail pitcher, what to do
I have decreed; keep it from waves and press,
Lest it be justled, cracked, made nought or less.
Live to that point I will, for which I am man,
And dwell as in my centre, as I can,
Still looking to, and ever loving heaven;
With reverence using all the gifts thence given.²

Perhaps the fullest statement of this general tenet appears in the Epitaph on Master Vincent Corbet. The concept of order here is intimately connected with regularity and composure of mind. The two qualities are inevitably associated.

Dear VINCENT CORBET, who so long
Had wrestled with diseases strong,
That though they did possess each limb,
Yet he broke them ere they could him,
With the just canon of his life,
A life that knew nor noise nor strife;
But was, by sweetning so his will,
All order and disposure still.

His mind as pure and neatly kept,
As were his nurseries, and swept
So of uncleanness or offence,
That never came ill odour thence!
And add his actions unto these,
They were as specious as his trees.³

The finest statement of this Stoic tenet which I have found in humanistic writing appears with a Christian context in Thomas Lupset's Treatise of Charitie. The Stoic source for the idea is, however, obvious.

Charitie requireth a quyetie spirite, and no spirite is quiete, that is subiecte to any passion. Wherefore to haue charitie we must chace from vs al passions. . . .

1. See "Masque of Hymen," (III, 26 - 27); "Barriers," (III, 32 - 33); "Masque Oberon," (III, 76a); Epig., XCVIII, (III, 246b); Epig., CXXVIII, (III, 255b); and especially Under., LXXXVIII, (III, 343a); and Cynthia's Revels, V, 3, (I, 199a).

2. Under., LXVI, (III, 327b).

3. Under., X, (III, 287a).

Nowe than to opteyne this rest of mynde, the chefe effecte of charitie, we must beware that no passion rule in vs, but alwayes. . . . we must ordre our desires by the draught and trayne of this one desire . . . of lounge god alone . . . neuer suffering the corrupte loue of this false flaterynge lyfe to haue any smal place in oure soule. . . .

This minde reste & perfect quietnes is the princypall effecte, of charitie, the conclusion and finalle perfection of all vertue.¹

In connection with fortitude, Lipsius states the doctrine in his Discourse of Constancy.

Now by Constancy I her understand; AN UPRIGHT UNMOVED STRENGTH OF THE MIND: NEITHER ELEVATED NOR DEPRESSED BY EXTERNAL OR ACCIDENTAL OCCURENCES. I said a strength, and I thereby understand such a firmness as is begot in the Mind, not by Opinion, but by Judgment and right Reason.

Levity therefore, . . . is the Comrade of Opinion, and the property of it is alwayes to change and to repent. But the associate of Reason is Constancy. . . . It shall be yours; vwho being truly a King, and truly free; shall be a subject unto God alone, exempt from the bondage both of the Affections and Fortune.²

Another general tenet which is a favorite of Seneca and which finds expression a number of times in Jonson is that the length of life is a matter of no concern. Virtue alone makes life noble, and just as truly so if the life-span be brief. Much of "A Pindaris Ode" in memory of Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison is devoted to an elaboration of this conception.

For what is life, if measured by the space,
Not by the act?
Or masked man, if valued by his face,
Above his fact?
Here's one outlived his peers,
And told forth fourscore years:
He vexed time, and busied the whole state;
Troubled both foes and friends;
But ever to no ends;
What did this stirrer but die late?
How well at twenty had he fallen or stood!
For three of his fourscore he did no good.

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make men better be;

1. John A. Gee, The Life and Works of Thomas Lupset, Yale Univ. Press, 1928, pp. 224, 226, and 231.

2. Trans. by N. Wanley, London, 1670, pp. 19 and 30 - 31.

Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear:
A lily of a day,
Is fairer, far, in May,
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see;¹
And in short measures life may perfect be.²

The same idea appears at the end of the epigram to Sir Ralph Shelton. Jonson has been comparing the life of Shelton with that of the vulgar and has praised him for living "to conscience, not to show."

He that, but living half his age, dies such,
Makes the whole longer than 'twas given him, much.²

From the negative point of view, Jonson presents the idea in Forest XIV.

And he that stays
To live until tomorrow, hath lost two days.³

The first conversation of Clerimont and Truewit in Epicene develops this same conception.

Cler. Come the other are considerations when we come to have gray heads and weak hams, moist eyes and shrunk members. We'll think on 'em then; then we'll pray and fast.

True. Ay, and destine only that time of age to goodness, which our want of ability will not let us employ in evil!

Cler. Why, then 'tis time enough.

True. Yes; as if a man should sleep all the term and think to effect his business the last day. O, Clerimont, this time, because it is an incorporeal thing, and not subject to sense, we mock ourselves the finest out of it, with vanity and misery indeed! not seeking and end of wretchedness, but only changing the matter still.⁴

Much of Seneca's De brevitae vitae is concerned with this question. The following short passages will indicate Jonson's indebtedness.

Shamest thou not to make reckoning how to lead thy life to come, and to paynt such time for amendment, which almost can serve for nothing?

And so no end is sought of the miseries we are in, but euerie day we change the matter which procureth miseries.⁵

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1. Under., LXXXVIII. (III, 342b and 343a-b).
 2. Epig., CXIX. (III, 254a).
 3. III, 275b.
 4. I, 1. (I, 405 - 06).
 5. Secs. 4 (Lodge, 678) and 17 (Lodge, 691).

Epigram LXX, addressed to William Roe, admirably summarizes this Stoic tenet. I present it with some rather close parallels in Seneca.

When nature bids us leave to live, 'tis late
Then to begin, my ROE! He makes a state
In life, that can employ it; and takes hold
On the true causes, ere they grow too old.
Delay is bad, doubt worse, depending worst;
Each best day of our life escapes us first:
Then since we, more than many, these truth know;
Though life be short, let us not make it so.¹

The Senecan parallels are from the De brevitae vitae.

How late is it to begin to live then when thou must leave to live?
or how fond forgetfulness of mortality is it to delay amendment to
thy fiftieth year of age. . . .

Truly when our life shall be extended to a thousand yeares, yet
shall it be reduced within a little scantling. Time shall deuoure
all this, and in respect of this course which Nature furnisheth and
Reason prolongeth, of necessitie it must escape from vs sodainly,
and be incontinently ended, for we lay not hold on it, wee possesse
it not. . . .

All our life is diuided into three parts, that is, that was, and
that is to come: that wee doe God knowes is short, that we shall
doe is doubtfull, that we haue done is out of doubt.²

The absolute sufficiency of virtue, which makes man's life both self-determining and self-sufficient, is another Stoic concept closely related to many of these ethical tenets. The conception arises first from the Stoic demand for self-knowledge which must be completed by as wide a knowledge of nature in general as possible; and second, from the firm confidence of the Stoic in the power of reason to guide and regulate human life toward perfection.

The idea finds expression in Jonson in several ways. First, the virtuous should live honourably for their own sakes. Cynthia concludes a speech,

It behoves the high,
For their own sakes, to do things worthily.

1. III, 238b.

2. Secs. 4, (Lodge, 678); 6, (Lodge, 680); and 10, (Lodge, 684). One could easily here as elsewhere multiply illustrative passages from Seneca.

Are. Most true, most sacred goddess;
for the heavens
Receive no good of all the good they do.
Nor Jove, nor you, nor other heavenly Powers,
Are fed with fumes which do from incense rise,
Or sacrifices reeking in their gore.¹

The conception reappears twice in "The Golden Age Restores."

But that his Jove's care conserveth,
As time, so all time's honours too,
Regarding still what heaven should do,
And not what earth deserveth.

and

Let narrow natures, how they will, mistake,
The great should still be good for their own sake.²

Seneca presents the idea in relation to beneficence:

But least by these discourses I should fall into a foraine dispute, I say that God bestoweth many and mightie benefits; one was, without hope of interest or recompence: for hee hath no need of our tribute, neither can we also give him anything. A benefit therefore ought to be desired for the love of itselfe; the only thing that is respected therein, is the profit of the receiver: herein let vs employ our selves, forgetting our owne private commodities.³

The belief that virtue requires nothing but virtuous action to make man's life complete and satisfying appears several times. In Cynthia's Revels, after Mercury has urged Crites to participate in bringing the courtiers out of their humours, Crites finally agrees, with this comment on the sufficiency of his virtue to face any result:

Well, since my leader-on is Mercury,
I shall not fear to follow. If I fall,
My proper virtue shall be my relief,
That followed such a cause, and such a chief.⁴

1. Cynthia's Revels, V, 3, (I, 197a). Cf. De ben. IV, 26 (Lodge, 81).

2. III, 101a and 102b.

3. De ben., IV, 9, (Lodge, 70).

4. V, I, (I, 183b). This passage and those immediately following are all closely related to the distinctly Stoic conception of fortitude.

"De sibi molestis" in Discoveries, though presenting other ideas, clearly states the sufficiency of virtue to face the adverse opinion of the world concerning the action which virtue has dictated. The central portion of the passage considers the order and regularity of the virtuous life.

Some men what losses soever they have, make them greater: and if they have none, even all that is not gotten is a loss. Can there be creatures of more wretched condition than these, that continually labour under their own misery, and others' envy? a man should study other things, not to covet, not to fear, not to repent him: to make his base such as no tempest shall shake him: to be secure of all opinion, and pleasing to himself, even for that wherein he displeaseth others: for the worst opinion gotten for doing well, should delight us. Wouldst not thou be just but for fame, thou ought'st to be it with infamy: he that would have his virtue published, is not the servant of virtue, but glory.¹

Seneca has dealt with this question in De beneficiis.

Nay will I say thus much more, sometimes even hee is thankfull, which seemeth vnthankfull, and whom misdeeming opinion traduceth for the contrarie. Wherein then reposeth this man his trust, but in his conscience, which reioyceth in it selfe, although it be oppressed, which reclaimeth and gainsayeth all that eloquence can vrge, or fauour detract: and reposeth all things in her selfe? And though she seeth neuer so huge a multitude of men that reprove her intentions, she maketh no reckoning of the contrary opinions, but thinketh to justifie her selfe in her owne secret judgement. And albeit she perceiue, that her faithfulnessse beare the punishment of perfidiousnes, yet she abateth no whit of her courage, neither is gashed thereat, but standeth still aloft aboue her punishment.²

Not only does virtue offer relief from the blows of envy or malice; virtuous action alone is the glory of the virtuous life. The epigram addressed to the Honoured Countess of **** praises her virtuous life in the midst of the prevailing vice of the time.

Who (herein studying conscience, and not fame)
Are in yourself rewarded.³

Arete's description of Crites is also significant here:

1. III, 408a-b. Castelain has pointed out the source of this passage in his edition of Diso., pp. 73 - 74. I present here an additional parallel.

2. IV, 21 (Lodge, 77).

3. Under., LXIX, (III, 329b).

Lo, here the man, celestial Delia,
Who (like a circle bounded in itself)
Contains as much as man in fulness may.
Lo, here the man who not of usual earth,

Yet to himself he would not wanting be.¹

Seneca says of this quality of virtue:

Virtue needs nothing to set it off; it is its own great glory,
and hallows the body in which it dwells.²

All of these passages deal more or less directly with the conception of the self-sufficiency of the virtuous life. This ethical concept is intimately associated with the broader doctrine of fortitude. From a slightly different, or a slightly more practical point of view, virtue should look for no reward for its virtuous actions. In the epigram to Sir Henry Car, Jonson says:

Love honours, which of best example be
When they cost dearest and are done most free.
Though every fortitude deserves applause,
It may be much or little in the cause.
He's valiant 'st that dares fight, and not for pay;
That virtuous is, when the reward's away.³

The reward, the applause, is an indifferent value. The idea is still more forcefully expressed in Jonson's "Ode to Himself."

Minds that are great and free
Should not on fortune pause,
'Tis crown enough to virtue still, her own applause.⁴

Seneca phrases the conception in De beneficiis as follows:

What reward shall I then have, saiest thou, if I do this thing valiantly, or that thing gratefully? The deed it self: Nothing is promised thee besides. If any profit casually befall thee, number it among thy casual advantages. The price of honest things is in themselves.⁵

The conception is common in Seneca, and it is a generally stressed Stoic doctrine.

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1. Cynthia's Revels, V, 3, (I, 199a).
 2. Ep., LXVI, 2, (II, 3).
 3. Epig., LXVI, (III, 238a).
 4. Under., XLI, (III, 308a).
 5. IV, I, (Lodge, 66).

The reward for all the virtues lies in the virtues themselves.

. . .
You need not look about for the reward of a just deed; a just deed in itself offers a still greater reward. . . . Those who wish their virtue to be advertised are not striving for virtue but for renown.¹

In general the humanists, in contrast to Jonson and Seneca, seem not to question that the virtuous life will receive its just reward. They are not preoccupied with a malevolent fate. More's attitude is interesting. I am perhaps justified in quoting a brief passage from the discussion of "pleasure as the end of life" in the Utopia.

For there was never man so earnest and painful a follower of vertue and hater of pleasure, that wold so injoyne you laboures, watchinges, and fastinges, but he would also exhort you to ease, lighten, and relieve, to your powre the lack and misery of others, praying the same as a ded of humanitie and pitie. Then if it be a poynte of humanitie for a man to bring health and comforte to man, and especiallie (which is a vertue moste peculiarie belonging to man) to mitigate and assuage the grieffe of others, and by takyng from them the sorowe and hevynes of lyfe, to restore them to joye, that is to saye, to pleasure: whie may it not then be sayd that nature doth provoke everye man to doo the same to himselfe.²

And later in the same passage he adds:

These lawes of personal and social obligation not offended,
it is wysdome, that thou looke to thine own wealthe.²

Finally, Jonson believes that virtue alone lends
happiness.

Oh that we understood
Our good!
There's happiness indeed in blood,
And store,
But how much more,
When virtue's flood
In the same stream doth hit!
As that grown high with years, so happiness with it.³

1. Seneca, *Eps.*, LXXXI, 19 (II, 231) and CXIII, 31 - 32 (III, 299). For this last idea in Jonson, see *Disc.*, "De sibi molestis," (III, 408b): "He that would have his virtue published, is not a servant of virtue, but glory."

2. Everyman ed., pp. 73 and 74.

3. "The Gipsies Metamorphosed," (III, 160b).

This happiness is a quality of the mind, for it results from virtue. It consists in not coveting "unnecessary things" and in possessing a mind ordering the life to the law of nature.¹ This inner quality of happiness makes possible the use of the gifts of chance and fate, but it also makes possible complete independence from any of these externals. "Say we wanted them all. Famine ends famine."²

God wisheth none should wreck on a strange shelf:
To him man's dearer than t'himself,
And howsoever we may think things sweet,
He always gives what he knows meet;
Which who can use is happy: such be thou.
Thy morning's and thy evening's vow
Be thanks to Him, and earnest pray'r, to find
A body sound, with sounder mind;
To do thy country service, thyself right;
That neither want do thee affright,
Nor death; but when thy latest sand is spent,
Thou mayst think life a thing but lent.³

Seneca states the fundamental doctrine in his Epistles.

The joy of a wise man . . . is a woven fabric, rent by no chance happening and no change of fortune; at all times and in all places he is at peace. For his joy depends on nothing external . . . His happiness is something within himself.⁴

The whole of De tranquillitate animi is also concerned with this matter. I quote but one sentence as a parallel with the conclusion of the Jonson passage above.

We must therefore above all things set light by this life, and account our souls amongst the number of those things that are not ours.⁵

The belief that virtue lends happiness, is, of course, one of the basic tenets of humanism. More says in the Utopia:

What other thing is delectation, than that whiche by an other name is called pleasure? They the Utopians imbrace chiefly the pleasures of the mind. For them they counte the

1. This conception is again intimately associated with the doctrine of Stoic fortitude. See Disc., "Amor Nummi," (III, 407b). The passage is based on Seneca's Ep., CX.

2. Disc., "Amor Nummi," (III, 407b).

3. Forest III, (III, 265b).

4. LXXII, 4 - 5 (II, 99).

5. Sec. 11 (Lodge, 647).

chiefist and most principall of all. The chiefe parte of them they thinke doth come of the exercise of vertue, and conscience of good life.¹

A fuller statement appears in Erasmus's Colloquies. Antronius, a monk, is speaking with Magdalia, a learned lady.

Mag. Ought not everyone to live well ?

Ant. I am of Opinion, they ought so to do.

Mag. Well, can any Body live a pleasant Life, that does not live a good life ?

Ant. Not, rather, how can any Body live a pleasant Life, that does live a good Life ?

Mag. Why then, do you approve of living illy, if it be but pleasantly ?

Ant. I am of Opinion, that they live a good Life, that live a pleasant life.

Mag. Well, but from whence does that Pleasure proceed ? From outward Things, or from the Mind ?

Ant. From outward Things.

Mag. O subtle Abbot, but thick-skull'd Philosopher! Pray tell me in what you suppose a pleasant Life to consist ?

Ant. Why, in Sleeping, and Feasting, and Liberty of doing what you please, in Wealth and Honours.

Mag. But suppose that to all these Things God should add Wisdom, should you live pleasantly then ?

Ant. What is it that you call by the name of Wisdom ?

Mag. This is Wisdom, to know that a Man is only happy by the Goods of the Mind. That Wealth, Honour, and Desecant, neither make a Man happier nor better.

Ant. If that be Wisdom, fare it well for me.²

The closeness of the relation of Jonson to Stoic thought will at once be clear from this discussion of his general ethical tenets. It is equally interesting to analyze Jonson's indebtedness to Stoicism for more practical suggestions concerning growth in virtue. The practical question of how virtue could be achieved occupied much of the attention of the later Stoics, like Seneca, and Jonson has considered the problem in detail.

Life, as Jonson visualizes it, is a constant conflict between reason, the life of the soul, and passion or affection, the life of the senses. The perfect solution of the conflict is

1. Everyman ed., p. 79.

2. "The Monk and the Learned Lady," (Bailey - Johnson).

the complete control of reason over the passions and affections.¹ This ethical ideal, though conventional in the sixteenth century, is the Stoic position. It is equally, however, the position of the early humanists. In analyzing the teacher's problem Vives remarks:

Let him the teacher show, again and again, how it is recorded that this life is a perpetual struggle, fierce and vehement; that the passions of the soul, in opposition to the reason, are always girded and prepared for battle, and that if they conquer, the result is the bitterest perdition to man, therefore, much must be said and done against them constantly, lest they beat down our strength. It cannot be told how many bad passions foolish boys let arise within them, thinking that there is no harm in them, and when, after they have become more noticeable, they try to uproot the habits, they find that they have undertaken a task by no means easy; for the passions put forth roots, and frequently sprout forth anew.²

Later in the century, Lipsius stated the Stoic position in clear relief in his essay on Constancy.

There are . . . two parts in Man, Soul and Body: . . . These two are joined together, yet with a kind of disagreeing Concord. . . For both have a desire to sway. . . . From hence are those broils and troubles in a Man The chief Leaders, and as it were Generalls unto these are Reason and Opinion. The one is for the Soul and warres therein; the other is for the Body, and in the Body it fights. Reason derives its pedigree from Heaven. . . . For this is that most excellent faculty of understanding and judging, which is no less the perfection of the Soul, than the Soul is the perfection of the Man.³

From this point of view Jonson comments in Discoveries on men who have become hardened in sin, men whose minds have "come to sojourn with their affections" until psychologically and morally they are completely diseased.

1. Jonson's finest statements concerning the psychological basis of right action are to be found in: Disc., "Opinio," (III, 390b); "Negotia," (III, 390a); and "Scientia," (III, 400a-b); the quarto ed. of Every Man in, II, 2. ff.; and especially Forest XI, (III, 269 - 70).

2. F. Watson, Vives: On Education, p. 84.

3. A Discourse of Constancy, London, 1670, pp. 24 ff. Lipsius concincues with an elaborate discussion of opinion, upon which Jonson based the section of Discoveries by that name, (III, 390b):

It was impossible to reform these natures; they were dried and hardened in their ill. They may say they desired to leave it; but do not trust them; and they may think they desired it, but they may lie for all that: they are a little angry with their follies now and then; marry they come into grace with them again quickly. They will confess they are offended with their manner of living; like enough; who is not? When they can put me in security that they are more than offended, that they hate it, then will I harken to them; and perhaps believe them: but many now a days love and hate their ill together.¹

This passage was modelled upon Seneca.

I am indeed anxious that your friend be moulded and trained, according to your desire. But he has been taken in a very hardened state, or rather . . . in a very soft state, broken down by bad and inveterate habits. . . .

Now this person . . . has no strength. . . . He has . . . become flabby and hardened. He cannot receive reason, nor can he nourish it. . . . "But he says that he is put out with his former way of living." Very likely. Who is not? Men love and hate their vices at the same time. It will be the proper season to pass judgment on him when he has given us a guarantee that he really hates luxury; as it is now, luxury and he are merely not on speaking terms.²

Caesar in the Postaster, from a slightly different point of view, stresses the same idea.

There is no bounty to be showed to such
As have no real goodness: bounty is
A spice of virtue; and what virtuous act
Can take effect on them, that have no power
Of equal habitude to apprehend it,

I will prefer for knowledge, none but such
As rule their lives by it, and can becalm
All sea of Humour with the marble trident
Of their strong spirits: others fight below
With gnats and shadows; others nothing know.³

Since it is possible for vices to be strengthened into diseases,⁴ it is a matter of some moment that men do not delay reformation until the affections have control of their life.

Jonson has admirably stated it:

1. "Nullum vitium sine patrocinio," (III, 397a).

2. Ep., CXII, 1 - 4, (III, 281 - 83).

3. IV, 3, (I, 244b - 45a).

4. Seneca says: "Diseases are hardened and chronic vices, such as greed and ambition. . . . By 'disease' we mean a persistent perversion of the judgment, so that things which are mildly desirable are thought to be highly desirable." Ep., LXXV, 11, (II, 143).

It is a dangerous thing when men's minds come to sojourn with their affections, and their diseases eat into their strength: that when too much desire and greediness of vice hath made the body unfit, or unprofitable, it is yet gladdened with the sight and spectacle of it in others; and for want of ability to be an actor, is content to be a witness. It enjoys the pleasure of sinning, in beholding others sin; as in dicing, drinking, drabbing, &c. Nay, when it cannot do all these, it is offended with his own narrowness, that excludes it from the universal delights of mankind; and oftentimes dies of a Melancholy, that it cannot be vicious enough.¹

This passage again is based upon Seneca's Epistles.

When the disease has gradually eaten away the strength, and luxurious habits have penetrated the marrow and the sinews, such a soul exults at the sight of limbs which, through its overindulgence, it has made useless; instead of its own pleasures, it views those of others; it becomes the go-between and witness of the passions which, as a result of self-gratification, it can no longer feel. Abundance of delights is not so pleasing a thing to that soul as it is bitter, because it cannot send all the dainties of yore down through the over-worked throat and stomach, because it can no longer whirl in the maze of eunuchs and mistresses, and it is melancholy because a great part of its happiness is shut off, through the limitations of the body.²

The belief that the passions must be checked without delay appears in a passage which I have presented from Vives³ and in several of Jonson's statements which I have already presented with their parallels.⁴

Jonson also insists as an aid to virtue, that virtue is its own reward⁵ and sin its own punishment:

But there's not one of these who are unpained,
Or by themselves unpunished: for vice
Is like a fury to the vicious mind,
And turns delight itself to punishment.⁶

Much of Seneca's Epistle XCVII is devoted to a statement of this principle. A single sentence will, however, sufficiently indicate his treatment:

The first and worst penalty for sin is to have committed sin;

1. Diso., "Periculosa melancholia," (III, 408b).

2. Ep., CXIV, 23 - 25, (III, 317). Cf., Diso., ed. by Castelain, p. 74.

3. See p. 25, supra.

4. See, for example, pp. 16 - 18.

5. See pp. 20 ff., supra.

6. Cynthia's Revels, V, 3, (I, 203a).

. . . the punishment of crime lies in the crime itself.¹

Jonson elaborates the idea in "Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue."

Hercules speaks:

Burdens and shames of nature, perish, die!
For yet you never lived, but in a sty
Of vice have wallowed, and in that swine's strife,
Been buried under the offence of life:
Go reel and fall under the load you make,
Till your swollen bowels burst with what you take,
Can this be pleasure to extinguish man,
Or so quite change in him his figure? can
The Belly love his pain, and be content
With no delight but what's a punishment?
These monsters plague themselves, and fitly too,
For they do suffer what and all they do.²

It is strange then that men should be prone to justify their vice, rather than correct it. Jonson, in discussing this attitude of mankind toward viciousness, stresses man's power to live virtuously if he so desires. I have already noted Jonson's belief in reason and in men's ability to judge correctly, but neither of these things necessarily implies right action. In the passage which follows Jonson emphasizes the necessity for action, following the dictates of reason, if life is to be virtuous.

It is strange that there should be no vice without its patronage, that, when we have no other excuse, we will say we love it; we cannot forsake it. As if that made it not more a fault. We cannot, because we think we cannot, and we love it because we will defend it. We will rather excuse it than be rid of it. That we cannot is pretended; but that we will not is the true reason.³

Seneca again provides the source for Jonson's statement.

There is no vice which lacks some plea; there is no vice that at the start is not modest and easily entreated. . . . We refuse to believe in our power. May, of a surity . . . we are in love

1. Ep. (III, 115-17). Cf., De ira, II, 30, 2; and III, 26, 2.

2. Vol. III, 123a. The same idea forms the basis of Epigram LXXX, (III, 240b), "On Life and Death."

3. Disc., "Nullum vitium sine patrocinio," (III, 397a). Jonson develops the conception in the rest of this passage, basing his discussion upon Seneca's Ep., CXXII, 2 - 18, (III, 413 - 23).

with our vices; we uphold them and prefer to make excuses for them rather than shake them off. . . . The real reason for failure is unwillingness, the pretended reason, inability.¹

A passage toward the close of the Devil is an Ass, beginning with this same conception, adds a new idea in the process of growth toward virtue. The point of view is that of the teacher, not the student of virtue.

It is not manly to take joy or pride
In human errors; we do all ill things;
They do them worst that love them, and dwell there
Till the plague comes. The few that have the seeds
Of goodness left, will soener make their way
To a true life, by shame, than punishment.²

The idea is developed in two passages in Every Man in His Humour.

There is a way of winning more by love,
And urging of the modesty, than fear:
Force works on servile natures, not the free.
He that's compelled to goodness, may be good,
But 'tis but for that fit; where others, drawn
By softness and example, get a habit.
Then if they stray, but warn them, and the same
They should for virtue have done, they'll do
for shame.³

Thus Knowell plans to draw his son gently to virtue. Later Kitsely gives Downright the same advice for his treatment of Wellbred.

But, brother, let your reprehension, then,
Run in an easy current, not o'er high
Carried with rashness, or devouring choler,
But rather use the soft persuading way,
Whose powers will work more gently and compose
The imperfect thoughts you labour to reclaim;
More winning, than enforcing the consent.⁴

1. Ep., CXVI, 3 - 8 (III, 333 - 37). Of., Disc., ed by Castelain, pp. 31 - 32. The same idea appears again in Jonson:

Can we not leave this worm? or will we not?
Is that the truer excuse? or have we got
In this, and like, an itch of vanity,
That scratching now's our best felicity?

Under, XXXII, (III, 304b). Briggs, in MP, IV, , refers to De tran. animi, II, 11 - 12, as a source. The figure of speech is there but the context is quite different.

2. V, 5, (II, 272b). For a source see, De ben.,

3. I, 1, (I, 7b).

4. II, 1, (I, 18a).

The most complete statement of the practical aspects of this growth toward virtue appears at the end of "An Epistle to Sir Edward Sackville. All of the fundamental moral tenets appear here. The process is twofold: first, the acquiring of knowledge, made possible by man's gift of reason; and second, the utilization of this knowledge by constant efforts toward right action. This double process is fundamental to the thought both of Seneca and of the early humanists. Vives and Erasmus both state the principle.¹

I have the list of my own faults to know,
Look to, and cure: he's not a man hath none,
But like to be that every day mends one,
And feels it; else he tarries by the beast.
Can I discern how shadows are decreast,
Or grown, by height or lowness of the sun,
And can I less of substance? when I run,
Ride, sail, am coached, know I how far I have
gone;
And my mind's motion not? or have I none?
No! he must feel and know, that will advance,
Men have been great, but never good by chance
Or on the sudden. It were strange that he
Who was this morning such a one, should be
Sidney ere night! or that did go to bed
Coryat, should rise the most sufficient head
Of Christendom; and neither of these know,
Were the rack offered them, how they came so!
'Tis by degrees that men arrive at glad
Profit in aught; each day some little add,
In time 'twill be a heap: this is not true
Alone in-money, but in manners too.
Yet we must more than move still, or go on,
We must accomplish: 'tis the last key-stone
That makes the arch; the rest that there were
put
Are nothing till that come to bind and shut.²

Ben Jonson was primarily a satirist. But his satire, like that of Erasmus, was not essentially negative. It was grounded in

1. See Watson, Vives: On Education, pp. 253 - 54; and Woodward, Erasmus Concerning Education, p. 159.

2. Under., XXX, (III, 300b). Cf., Briggs, MP, XV, 280 - 82, for sources of the passage.

a firm and considered system of ethics. It would be quite false, however, to consider him a philosopher for he shows no interest in the countless metaphysical problems which he surely met in his wide reading. Jonson approached the classics, not as a philosopher but as a teacher. His is the attitude which Vives and Erasmus propose for their teacher of moral philosophy. He should ask himself with each new volume, what precepts will it yield for right living ?

Vives, considering the relative value of the classics as teachers, placed Seneca very high.¹ Lupset is certain in his advice to Withypoll that from Seneca "ye shall lerne as moche of vertue as mans wit can teche you."² And Whyttynton declares that Seneca was "named of all men in our tyme, the mayster of honest lyuyng."³ It is not surprising then, that Jonson should have felt him to be an incomparable teacher. Jonson's judgment was the judgment of the humanists.

It is clear, even from the brief survey I have presented here, that Jonson was directly and profoundly influenced by Seneca. Seneca had earlier, however, left the impress of his thought upon the humanists, and more generally upon the sixteenth century. Justus Lipsius devoted a lifetime to the editing of his works. It is essential, therefore, in any study of Jonson's ethics to balance this more general Stoic thought of the sixteenth century with the strictly Senecan material in order to indicate the particular blend of Stoic idealism which constituted Jonson's ethical beliefs.

1. Watson, *Vives: On Education*, p. 253.

2. J. A. Gee, *The Life and Works of Thomas Lupset*, p. 245.

3. *A frvtfull worke of Lvclos Anneus Senecae, Called the Myrrour or Glasse of Maners and Wyshedome*, London, 1547, pp. A4-

